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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MONTREAL 001555

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [ENRG](#) [PTER](#) [PBTS](#) [CA](#)

SUBJECT: HYDRO QUEBEC PYLON VANDALIZED

REF: REF: 03 OTTAWA 2558

Classified By: PRINCIPAL OFFICER BERNADETTE M. ALLEN; Reason: 1.4

1. (C) Thierry Vandal, President of Hydro Quebec, Production division, described the recent vandalism at a Hydro Quebec pylon about a mile from the U.S. border, near Coaticook in Quebec, Eastern Townships, as the work of amateurs.8 In a 12/7 meeting with the Quebec City Consul General, Montreal PAO and FSN Assistant, Vandal noted that the perpetrators of the action had placed explosives at the base of an electricity transmission line pylon which was one of several in a straight line that is part of the Radisson-Sandy Point, Massachusetts direct current transmission line. But the explosion caused no noticeable break in power transmission, because the line itself was not damaged. Vandal said that a more knowledgeable or determined actor would have caused much more damage by attacking a transmission substation or a more vulnerable part of the pylon.

2. (U) The security incident, which is being investigated by the provincial Quebec police, the Surete du Quebec, has generated some media coverage, particularly after news organizations in Quebec and elsewhere received an email claim of responsibility (in French) on Saturday evening (12/4) signed by a group calling itself 1, Initiative de Resistance Internationaliste8 (IRI).

3. (U) An excerpt of the email, which was sent from a Yahoo account, published in the media, translates: This sabotage action, that the democratic authorities hid from the population during the visit of the Dictator in Chief is our response to the ease with which the State mocks the popular opposition. By this operation, we are concretely displaying our refusal to be passive witnesses of the waste and pillage of resources to profit from the United States empire. We are acting against our gross exploitation by Hydro Quebec for the benefit of private enterprises who profit from each opportunity that imperialism provides.8

4. (U) In addition to Quebec media outlets, the email reportedly was sent to international news organizations including the New York Times and al-Jazeera. The message referenced the situations in Iraq, Bolivia, Colombia and the Middle East: We refuse to allow all the weight of resistance to fall on the noble Iraqi people, who are being massacred because they were an obstacle to the American energy hegemony, or to the Bolivian peasants courageously mobilizing against the pillage of their gas resources, even risking their lives. We also refuse to let the Colombian and Palestinian people confront the imperial army alone, whether or not it is hidden behind a national banner.8

5. (C) Montreal Consulate DHS Senior Agent (MTL/DHS SA) has learned from Surete du Quebec contacts and DHS Immigration and Customs Enforcement colleagues that a hunter in the area had reported the damage to Hydro Quebec, the provincial electricity utility on November 28. The utility had last checked the pylon on November 1, according to the SQ. The hunter, apparently concerned that HQ was not taking action, placed a second call on December 1, prompting HQ to ask the Surete to investigate.

6. (C) At the request of MTL/DHS SA, the Derby Line border port of entry Resident Agent in Charge (RAC) walked to the damaged pylon (about a mile from the POE) on December 2 and encountered SQ officers who were in the process of securing the site. The RAC said that rocks had been used to hold the explosives in place around each of the four pylon tower legs; the blast apparently caused the central pole to move but not fall.

7. (C) MTL/DHS SA has since heard from SQ contacts that the perpetrators used 12 sticks of dynamite in the operation. SQ investigators are questioning whether the so-called 1, IRI8 group claiming responsibility was actually involved in the vandalism. So far, the SQ has learned that the email was sent from a caf on St. Laurent street in Montreal; they believe the sender was a young, highly-educated, Francophone, female.

8. (C) Vandal said that in response to the incident, HQ has raised its security levels to the utility's equivalent of Code Orange. In consultation with the North American Electricity Reliability Council (NERC), presently chaired by

former HQ Chairman and CEO Richard Drouin, HQ is putting special emphasis on the protection of substations. Vandal said that the possibility of several pylons falling simultaneously was not particularly worrisome as disruptions to service could be quickly resolved. Pylons located on HQ right-of-ways are relatively easy to approach and access. Vandal said that an attack on a substation would be a much greater cause for concern.

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